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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OUTCOME OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (HABITAT II)

Letter dated 7 May 1996 from the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of the Dubai Declaration, adopted by the Dubai International Conference for Habitat II on Best Practices in Improving the Living Environment held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 19 to 22 November 1995 (see annex I), and the text of the Regulations and Procedures concerning the Dubai Award for Best Practices to Improve the Living Environment (see annex II). The Award will be presented biennially and will be announced through the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements and the information media.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the General Assembly under item 99 (e) of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Mohammad J. SAMHAN
Permanent Representative

* A/52/50.

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ANNEX I

[Original: Arabic, English and French]

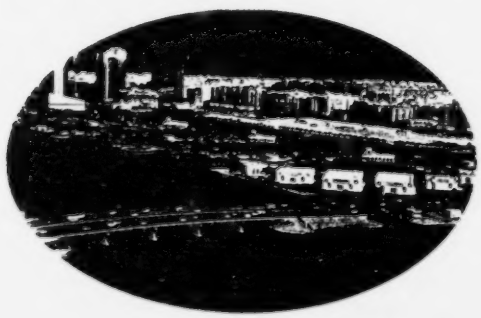
DUBAI DECLARATION

THE DUBAI INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR HABITAT II ON BEST PRACTICES IN IMPROVING THE LIVING ENVIRONMENT, having brought together over 900 delegates from governments, United Nations Agencies, international organizations, local authorities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), professional associations and the private sector, from 19th to 22nd November 1995, and having reviewed a selection of 28 Best Practices documented for the Habitat II Conference:

BACKGROUND AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1) Recalling Agenda 21 adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992) and particularly its chapters 7 and 28 which highlight the essential linkages between human settlements and sustainable development;

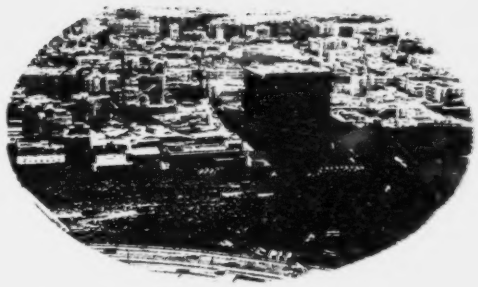
2) Also recalling the United Nations Conferences on the Rights of the Child (New York,1991), Population and Development (Cairo,1994), Social Development (Copenhagen,1995) and Women and Development (Beijing,1995) which highlighted major human development issues: unsafe and unhealthy environment, violence and the differentiated effects each has on men and women;



3) Desirous to explore the full implications of the recommendations of these conferences for sustainable urban development;

4) Recognizing the importance of the call of the General Assembly to forge a positive vision of an urbanizing

world and the goals of Habitat II - "The City Summit": adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world;



5) Recognizing that human settlements are where sectoral issues addressed at previous conferences intersect in daily life and that Habitat II represents the convergence of on-going local and global concerns as well as an opportunity for the confirmation and consolidation of earlier plans of actions;

6) Recognizing the recommendations and decisions of the Preparatory Committee for Habitat II calling upon all national committees and the Secretariat to identify and disseminate best practices as an integral part of the preparatory process and establishing guidelines and criteria for this purpose;

7) Concerned with finding practical and sustainable solutions to the social, economic and environmental challenges facing an urbanizing world, including: management of development; employment creation and poverty elimination; access to land and security of tenure; management, protection and rehabilitation of the environment; efficient use of resources; prevention of crime and all forms of violence; rehabilitation of refugees and displaced persons; equality for all men and women; social integration and equality for children, the elderly and the disabled; empowerment of local communities; and access to shelter, basic services and finance;

8) Equally concerned with the need for the Habitat Agenda resulting from the "City Summit" to guide and inspire concrete actions in solving shelter and human settlements problems in an integrated and sustainable way for the first two decades of the 21st century;

9) Recognizing that special attention has to be given to the situation of poor countries in assuring balance between urban and rural development and the continuing need for international co-operation for shelter and basic infrastructure;

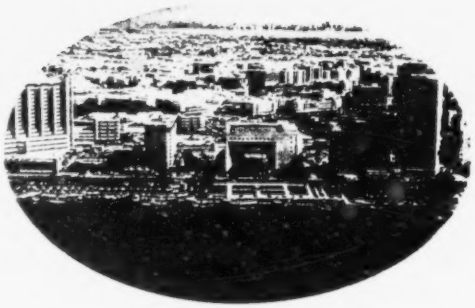
10) Believing that the worldwide promotion of effective mechanisms for extending the exchange of best practices will significantly contribute towards empowering local communities to shape their futures;

11) Acknowledging the various institutional, financial and human resources constraints may limit local capacity to take full advantage of and contribute to such best practice exchanges and that these constraints particularly the need for human resources development and adaptation, also be addressed in this context;

12) Expressing appreciation for the invaluable contribution of Dubai Municipality, United Arab Emirates, in sponsoring and hosting the International Conference on Best Practices in Improving the Living Environment and providing assistance to partners in developing countries to facilitate the documentation of their case studies;

13) Commending the leadership of UNCHS (Habitat) in providing technical assistance and disseminating guidelines, nomination criteria and unified format to facilitate the compilation and exchange of best practices, including the innovative methodology adopted to analyze and document their gender impact, as a major component of the Habitat II process;

14) Taking note of the efforts underway by UNCHS (Habitat) and its partners to disseminate the best



practices through electronic, printed and audio - visual media to the largest possible audience, updated electronic catalogue of best practices;

15) Believing that ready access in all parts of the world to such information will contribute to more effective and meaningful partnerships between and among governments, local authorities, NGOs/CBOs, and the professional, academic and private sectors in addressing the challenges of sustainable human settlements development;

RECOMMENDATIONS AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

1. Call for a co-ordinated strategy to be implemented by UNCHS (Habitat II) in collaboration with other United Nations agencies and all appropriate stakeholders, designed to empower action, influence policy at the local level, and promote real synergy between local, national and international development initiatives; and, to strengthen communication between national and local authorities and their constituencies;

2. Stress that any international effort for collecting and exchanging best practice information on human settlements development must be transparently designed and implemented with the organizations representing local authorities and other stakeholders, building upon their extensive international and national networks and expertise;

3. Recommend to the Preparatory Committee and the "City Summit" that the following considerations be added to complement the already adopted criteria of tangible impact, partnerships and sustainability for selecting those practices worthy of global dissemination:

a) Leadership in inspiring action and change, including change in public policy;

b) Promotion of accountability and transparency;

c) Empowerment of people, neighbourhoods and communities and incorporation of their contributions;

d) Acceptance of and responsiveness to social and cultural diversity;

e) Potential for transferability, adaptability and replicability;

f) Appropriateness to local conditions and levels of development;

g) Promotion of social equality and equity.

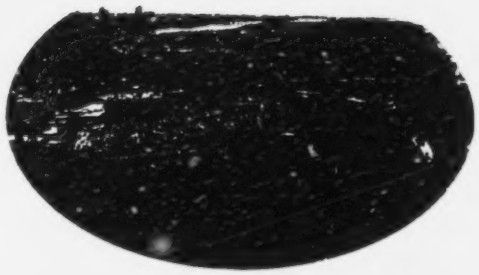
4. Further suggest that the following be incorporated to strengthen the unified reporting process to enhance best practice dissemination:

a) Ready and user-friendly access in all major languages to concise summary information outlining the elements and giving contact details for follow-up inquiries;

b) Formation of international networks to assess innovation, creativity and transferability of practices at various levels of development;

c) Establishment with the international associations of local authorities and other stakeholders of national and regional focal points to advice on the usefulness and on-going refinement of the system;

d) Formation of international networks to assess the extent to which participatory processes are used and diverse interests and needs, particularly those related to gender differences are assessed;



e) Development and use of indicators for participatory planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, disaggregated by gender and age.

5. Welcome the steps being taken by UNCHS (Habitat) in developing a global electronic catalogue on best practices, in its various forms including the Internet, CD-ROM, diskette and printed form, as well as other practical means of facilitating access by policy makers and practitioners to the experience of their counterparts in addressing common problems;

6. Encourage all governments, United Nations Agencies, local authorities and their associations, NGOs/CBOs and professional associations to work toward common reporting formats and processes and to establish direct and cross referencing links with each others systems and with the UNCHS (Habitat) electronic catalogue of best practices in order to greatly enhance and facilitate the transmission of information, experience and expertise to their respective end-users;

7. Call upon UNCHS (Habitat), in partnership with governments, other United Nations agencies, associations representing local authorities, the private, public, non-governmental, professional and voluntary sectors to explore mechanisms for compilation, systematic analysis and assessment of best practices as an integral part of the follow-up process beyond Habitat II, for the purpose of:

a) Developing best practice initiatives as sites of learning for sharing their experiences and knowledge base with the global community;

b) Using and disseminating best practice case studies as training, management and organizational development materials;

c) Further developing the best practices catalogue as a means of matching supply and demand for technical co-operation at all levels;

d) Compiling and disseminating an international roster of experience, expertise and knowledge based on those persons, institutions and organizations directly responsible for implementing the best practices;

e) Promoting the transfer and adaptation of environmentally sound, socially-responsive, economically viable technologies, products and services;

f) Furthering the transfer and adaptation of practical solutions for capacity-building, including staff exchange programmes, at the international, regional, national and local levels.

8. Welcome, with appreciation, the establishment by Dubai Municipality of the **Dubai Award for Best Practices** which will be administered in collaboration with UNCHS (Habitat);

9. Call upon UNCHS (Habitat) to make the presentation of the Dubai Declaration a part of the official events of the Istanbul Conference.

22 Nov. 1995

ANNEX II

[Original: Arabic, English and French]

THE REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES CONCERNING THE DUBAI AWARD FOR BEST PRACTICES

1. TITLE : Dubai Award for Best Practices to Improve the Living Environment (DABPILE).

2. PURPOSE : Recognition of outstanding achievements in improving the living environment as per the criteria established by the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and the Dubai Declaration.

3. THE AWARD : The award shall constitute a monetary prize of US$ 30,000 (for 10 selected Best Practices) accompanied by a trophy and a certificate especially designed for the award and containing the logos of Dubai Municipality, United Nations and UNCHS as well as the name of the recipient. The Award will also include the travel and accommodation for a delegation of up to two people directly involved in the award-winning Best Practice. The monetary award may be increased from time to time at the discretion of Dubai Municipality. The certificate will be signed by the Assistant Secretary-General of UNCHS/HABITAT, and the Director-General of Dubai Municipality. The spirit of the award should be cognizant of the contribution of the people and/or organizations directly involved in the best practice to sustainable human settlements development.

3.1 Total Amount of Award

The total amount of the Award is $ 400,000 (Four hundred thousand Dollars). This Amount will be divided as follows:

i. $ 300,000 (Three hundred thousand Dollars) for ten Best Practices.
ii. $ 100,000 (One Hundred thousand Dollars) towards management expenses. Dubai Municipality will be responsible for providing this entire amount.

4. PERIODICITY : The Award shall be presented biennially.

5. ELIGIBILITY : The Award is open to individuals, groups of individuals, institutions or organizations and associations, including international, governmental agencies, local authorities, non-governmental, community based and private organizations displaying outstanding merit and achieving tangible impact worthy of global dissemination as per the Dubai Declaration.

6. NOMINATION OF BEST PRACTICES

6.1 Nominations of Best Practices for the Award shall be submitted to UNCHS/HABITAT which shall arrange the selection process by an independent Technical Advisory Committee and by an independent jury both comprising reputable international experts and personalities respectively.

6.2 The following may submit or nominate Best Practices for the Award:

a. A Government organization or agency;
b. A National HABITAT Committee or focal point;
c. A local authority or association of local authorities;
d. A Non-Governmental organization;
e. A Community -based organization;
f. A private sector organization or association;
g. A public or private foundation.

6.3 Individuals may submit their nominations through any of the organizations listed in item 6.2 above.

6.4 Nominations for the Award shall be accompanied by:

a. A report on the nominated Best Practice as per the format described in item 7 hereunder;

b. A concise biographical statement of not more than three pages on the nominee who is credited with the achievement of the Best Practice.

6.5 National Competition :

Habitat National Committees are encouraged to organize, where possible, national competitions of Best Practices for nomination(s) for the Dubai Award for Best Practices to Improve the Living Environment.

7. REPORTING FORMAT

7.1 Stages of Reporting:

7.1.1 Stage I: Summary :

The first stage is a three-page summary that outlines the best practice. The submission for each best practice should use the structure and sequence of headings as set out below. Maximum use should be made of photographs, drawings, charts and diagrams, taking note of the maxim that "one picture is worth a thousand words."

a. Title: The title should provide some indication of the sector involved, for example: "Public transport in Curutiba, Brazil";

b. Names of key organizations and groups involved in the best practice, with names, positions and contact addresses, telephone and fax numbers of at least two individuals involved in the best practice;

c. Key dates in the history of the best practice and status as of the date of submission;

d. Before: A description, in no more than 300 words, of the problems, conditions or issues affecting the living environment;

e. After: A description, in no more than 300 words, of the current conditions of the living environment;

f. Strategy: A description, in no more than 1000 words of the strategy used to achieve improvement in the living environment .
For example, describe any changes in:

i. Legislation, laws and by-laws;
ii. Sectoral policies and strategies applied;
iii. Institutional arrangements and partnerships;
iv. Management systems and decision-making processes;

g. Learning Process: Lessons learned, including difficulties encountered, and how these lessons have been incorporated and/or applied in practice.

7.1.2 Stage II : Final Submission:

a. This submission shall be the detailed version of the report comprising not more than 10 pages and covering the selection criteria listed in item 9 hereunder.

b. The detailed written version shall be submitted in hard copy and on the nomination diskette provided for this purpose.

7.1.3. Video Films :

a. Participants are required to produce a video film of broadcast quality, and not exceeding 12 minutes, of the selected best practice(s) to facilitate the selection process as well as for general viewing aimed at wider awareness building and dissemination.

b. Guidelines for submitting video films are available with UNCHS/Habitat upon request.

7.1.4 Language : Submissions should be made preferably in English,but could also be submitted in Arabic, French or Spanish.

8. SELECTION CRITERIA

The selection criteria for the Award shall be in strict compliance with those established by the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and by the Dubai Declaration. These are listed hereunder:

8.1 Impact : The best practice should demonstrate a positive and tangible impact on improving the living environment of people in at least one of the following categories and sub-categories. These categories are indicative and additional categories may be added as necessary .

i. Sustainable shelter and community development:
   a. Affordable housing and services;
   b. Access to land and finance;
   c. Community-based planning and participation in decision making and resource allocation;
   d. Extension of safe water supply and sanitation;
   e. Inner-city core, neighbourhood and settlement revival and rehabilitation;
   f. Safe and healthy building materials and technologies.

ii. Sustainable urban and regional development.

a. Job creation and eradication of poverty;
b. Reduction of pollution and improvement of environmental health;
c. Improved access to public transport and communication;
d. Improved waste collection, reuse and recycling;
e. Greening of the city and effective use of public space;
f. Improved production and consumption cycles, including replacement/reduction of non-renewable resources;
g. Protection and conservation of natural resources and of the environment;
h. More efficient energy use and production.

iii. Sustainable, efficient, accountable and transparent settlements management:

a. More effective and efficient administrative, management and information systems;
b. Gender equality and equity in decision-making, resource-allocation and programme design and implementation;
c. Crime reduction and prevention;
d. Improved disaster preparedness, mitigation and reconstruction;
e. Social integration and reduction of exclusion;
f. Leadership in inspiring action and change, including change in public policy;
g. Promotion of accountability and transparency;
h. Empowerment of people, neighbourhoods and communities and incorporation of their contributions;
i. Acceptance of and responsiveness to social and cultural diversity;

j. Potential for transferability, adaptability and replicability;

k. Appropriateness to local conditions and levels of development;

l. Promotion of social equality and equity.

8.2 Partnership : Best practices should be based on partnerships among at least two, or possibly more, of the following actors

i. National/ Central Government;
ii. Local Governments and their Associations;
iii. Non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations and voluntary organizations;
iv. Private sector;
v. International agencies;
vi. Media groups (press, TV, radio);
vii. Academic and scientific community;
viii. Human settlements professionals and their associations;
ix. Civic leaders, mayors, councilors.

8.3 Sustainability : Projects of programmes based on one-time external funding or showcase initiatives are hardly reconcilable with the principle of sustainability. Best practices should also demonstrate their tangible impact in bringing about lasting changes in at least one of the areas listed below. The nomination of an example of best practice requires the explicit backing by at least two independent actors using the criteria of sustainable impact described below:

i. Legislation, regulatory frameworks, by-laws or standards, providing formal recognition of the issues and problems that have been addressed;

ii. Social policies and/or sectoral strategies at the (sub) national level that have a potential for replication elsewhere;

iii. Institutional frameworks and decision-making processes that assign clear roles and responsibilities to various levels and groups of actors, such as, central and local governmental organizations and community-based organizations;

iv. Efficient, transparent and accountable management systems;

v. Management systems that make more efficient and effective use of human, technical, financial and natural resources.

9. SELECTION OF BEST PRACTICE

9.1 Stage I :

a. The first stage of the selection process shall be undertaken by an international panel of reputable and independent professional experts comprising a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to be appointed by UNCHS in coordination with Dubai Municipality.

b. The TAC shall select forty of the Best Practices on the basis of the criteria listed in item 8 above and submit them to the selection jury for the Dubai Award.

9.2 Stage II :

a. The second stage of the selection process shall be undertaken by the Selection Jury comprising high level international personalities who should be chosen jointly by UNCHS and Dubai Municipality every two years;

b. The jury shall recommend up to ten Best Practices that fully merit the Award as per the set criteria. The Jury may recommend less than ten or none for the Award depending on the quality of the nominated Best Practices. However, should there be more than ten Best Practices due to some or all being of equal excellence, the Jury may recommend the sharing of the Award accordingly up to a maximum of fifteen winning Best Practices;

c. The panel will have the authority to establish selection criteria closely linked with the nomination criteria;

d. The panel will announce its selection criteria, including any weighting, in its final report.

10. JURY

a. The Jury, one of whom should be nominated by Dubai Municipality, will comprise five members, including the Chairman, who should all be present at the time of selections;

b. The selection of the Jury members will be undertaken on the basis of the following considerations:

i. The panel should be independent, prestigious and transparent;

ii. The panel should be regionally representative and gender sensitive.

11. GENERAL SELECTION CONDITIONS

a. The TAC as well as the Jury shall apply objective and professional methods for assessing the nominations;

b. The decision of the Jury shall be final;

c. Persons or organizations involved in the selection process may not be considered for the Award;

d. Persons or organizations already granted the Award shall be eligible for selection in subsequent competitions unless their presentations are for the same subject for which they have already been given the Award.

12. THE AWARD CEREMONY & VENUE

12.1 The Award shall be presented by H.H. the Chairman of Dubai Municipality or his representative in the presence of the Assistant Secretary-General (UNCHS/HABITAT) at a public ceremony to be held in Dubai or at the venue of the annual World HABITAT Day celebration to be decided by Dubai Municipality in consultation with UNCHS.

12.2 Recipients or their duly authorized representatives are required to attend the Award ceremony. Dubai Municipality shall cover travel and accommodation costs, as per UN rules, for a maximum of two representatives for each Award.

12.3 Should a recipient refuse the award, the amount of the award shall remain the property of Dubai Municipality.

12.4 The award shall be granted posthumously to the legal heirs of a person who dies after having been selected for the Award by the jury.

12.5 Should the recipient be unable to receive the Award, Dubai Municipality shall decide upon the appropriate course of action to be taken in consultation with UNCHS (HABITAT).

12.6 Dubai Municipality shall announce biennially the amount of the Award through UNCHS as well as the public media.

13. SCHEDULE

The process of submission, selection and award shall be undertaken in accordance with the following schedule:

13.1 UNCHS (HABITAT) and Dubai Municipality shall publicize and call for proposals of Best Practices for the Dubai Award during October prior to the year the Award will be due.

13.2 Interested participants shall submit the Stage I report by 31st January every two years starting from January 31, 1998.

13.3 A UNCHS appointed Technical Advisory Committee(TAC) shall be selected by March 31, to assess the Best Practices proposals that fulfill the required criteria. UNCHS shall inform all participants of the TAC's decision and request the submission of Stage II reports from those proposers that have succeeded in the Stage I process.

13.4 Stage II reports plus videos shall be submitted to the TAC by May 30th and the Committee's report selecting up to forty Best Practices that meet the required criteria fully shall be submitted to the jury panel.

13.5 The jury panel shall meet in Dubai in June and select the Best Practices that deserve the Award subject to para 9.2 (b).

13.6 Dubai Municipality and UNCHS shall co-ordinate in making the necessary arrangements for the Award ceremony to take place on World HABITAT Day, October 4.